

## EXPLORING OUR FAITH – FAITH IN GOD...REALLY?

A fellow was stuck on his rooftop in a flood. He was praying to God for help. Soon a man in a rowboat came by and the fellow shouted to the man on the roof, “Jump in, I can save you.” The stranded fellow shouted back, “No, it’s OK, I’m praying to God and he is going to save me.” So, the rowboat went on. Then a motorboat came by. “The fellow in the motorboat shouted, “Jump in, I can save you.” To this the stranded man said, “No thanks, I’m praying to God and he is going to save me. I have faith.” So, the motorboat went on. Then a helicopter came by and the pilot shouted down, “Grab this rope and I will lift you to safety.” To this the stranded man again replied, “No thanks, I’m praying to God and he is going to save me. I have faith.” So, the helicopter reluctantly flew away. Soon the water rose above the rooftop and the man drowned. He went to Heaven. He finally got his chance to discuss this whole situation with God, at which point he exclaimed, “I had faith in you but you didn’t save me, you let me drown. I don’t understand why!” To this God replied, “I sent you a rowboat and a motorboat and a helicopter, what more did you expect?”

Many of you anticipated the punchline to this story, because many of you heard it before. Likewise, I’ve pondered this story numerous times during our battle with the COVID-19 virus, especially throughout the on-going vaccination stage. If you are reading this it means you are not counted among the 235 New Brunswickers, the 33,722 Canadians, or the 5.6 million worldwide who have died because of the virus. What grief for their families and friends! We are so fortunate to live in a country where we can access a vaccine for free. All we need to do is show up, roll up our sleeves, and exercise faith...faith the size of a mustard seed. We are so fortunate! Much of the world languishes with neither vaccines nor the healthcare professionals to administer it. So, the pandemic hunts them down at will. What they would give to be in our shoes!

Yet, we still have people who refuse to be vaccinated because they refuse to listen to doctors, epidemiologists, and the huge body of research all pointing to the fact that vaccines save lives. There are many reasons why this group of people refuse vaccinations, including religious reasons. They believe that somehow trusting in medicine is tantamount to not trusting in God. They have convinced themselves, in their distorted image of God, that God could not possibly work through the minds, hands, and hearts of doctors, nurses, and health professionals. They refuse to believe that God could possibly come in a rowboat, a motorboat or a helicopter...but only on a cloud from on high. Their image of God is a god who remains so far above it all. To me, it’s ultimately a denial of the incarnation itself. It’s very poor theology and, worse than that, it is theology with deadly effects. Good theology always starts with incarnation—the divine living fully our humanity. The genius of God is that God’s greatest and most intimate manifestation came—and still comes—in **human form**. God is in the one born in a barn; God is in the one serving coffee at Tim Horton’s; God is in the one rowing the boat; God is in the exhausted nurse; God is in the helicopter pilot; God is in the research scientist. Incarnation is not limited to a cold barn in Bethlehem 2000 years ago; incarnation is **still** happening.

Jesus compared the Kingdom of God to a man hosting a great banquet (Lk. 14:15-24). The invitation goes out but, one by one, those invited turn down the request with a variety of excuses. (Like vaccines themselves, the banquet is free). In response, the master tells his servants to go into the streets and alleys and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame. In fact, they are ordered to draw all into the banquet until the banquet hall is filled. Not one of those who initially turned down the invitation shall have a taste of the master’s banquet.

Perhaps the vaccines people are refusing in our country should be given to those in foreign countries who are literally “dying” for the chance to be vaccinated. Let’s give it to anyone and everyone open to the Master’s offer. Those refusing vaccinations (for non-medical reasons), should heed the Jesus’ words to Satan, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test” (Lk. 4:12).

~Fr. Phil Mulligan, St. Elizabeth of the Trinity Parish Unit

# Our Lady of Hope Pastoral Unit

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time  
6 February 2022

Immaculate Conception Church, Rexton

St-Peter's Church, South Branch



**Parish Office:**

12 School Street Rexton, NB E4W 2E5  
Phone: 506-523-6817 ~ Fax: 506-717-0245  
Email: [icprexton@rogers.com](mailto:icprexton@rogers.com)  
Web: <https://ourladyofhope.weebly.com/>

**Office Hours:**

Tuesday 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm,  
Wednesday & Thursday – 8:30 am - 12:30 pm



**Priest-Moderator:** Fr. Bernard Gauthier, C.Ss.R. 523-9788 Cell Phone: 889-0344

**Immaculate Conception Mass Times**

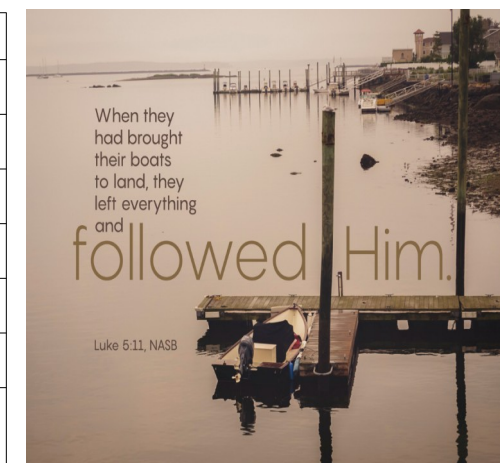
Sunday – 9:00 am & 4:00 pm (until further notice)  
Tuesday – 4:00 pm (Sacristy)

**St. Peter’s Mass Time**

Saturday – 4:00 pm

**Scripture Readings for Upcoming Week**

	1 Kings 8.1-7,9-13	Psalms	Mark
<b>Mon</b>	1 Kings 8.1-7,9-13	Psalms 132	Mark 6:53-56
<b>Tue</b>	1 Kings 8:22-23,27-30	Psalms 84	Mark 7:1-13
<b>Wed</b>	1 Kings 10:1-10	Psalms 37	Mark 7:14-23
<b>Thur</b>	1 Kings 11:4-13	Psalms 106	Mark 7:24-30
<b>Fri</b>	1 Kings 11:29-32	Psalms 81	Mark 7:31-37
<b>Sat</b>	1 Kings 12:26-32,13:33-34	Psalms 106	Mark 8:1-10
<b>Sun</b>	1 Jeremiah 17:5-8 1 Corinthians 15:12-20	Psalms 1	Luke 6:17,20-26



## PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LAST WEEK

### Immaculate Conception

Regular Env: **\$525.00**; Initial Offering: **\$30.00**; New Year's Offering: **\$50.00**;  
Heating for the Church: **\$200.00**;  
**TOTAL: \$805.00**

### St. Bartholomew Cemetery Fund

Donations IMO Teresa Warman: **\$65.00**

### Regional Mass Account

Masses: **\$30.00**

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Please note your envelope donations can also be left in the locked box outside the parish hall.

## MASS INTENTIONS FOR UPCOMING WEEK

Sat	5	SP	4:00 pm	Leon Vautour†	Yvon & Stella
Sun	6	IC	9:00 am	Imelda McKinnon†	Stuart & Bill
Sun	6	IC	4:00 pm	Linda & Edward Fagan†	Dwight & Jeannette
Tue	8	IC	4:00 pm	Lucy & Dorrence Campbell†	Dale & Debbie Harnett
Sat	12	SP	4:00 pm	Leon Vautour†	Lillian Vautour
Sun	13	IC	9:00 am	Imelda McKinnon†	Stuart & Bill
Sun	13	IC	4:00 pm	John Jr., & Emery Mourant†	Dwight & Jeannette Little

## LITURGY SCHEDULE FOR UPCOMING WEEK

				Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers
Sat	12	SP	4:00 pm	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading & Psalm 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading & Intentions	Lois Stella
Sun	13	IC	9:00 am	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading & Psalm 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading & Intentions	Pat Vina Gloria
Sun	13	SP	4:00 pm	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading & Psalm 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading & Intentions	Stephen

## WE PRAY FOR STRENGTH FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:

Alverie Robichaud, Roger Mazerolle and all residents in special care homes.



**COVID-19 UPDATE** We have returned to “Level 2” of the provincial COVID Winter Plan, so we are once again allowed to gather for mass with some restrictions:

### WEEKEND AND WEEKDAY MASSES; BAPTISMS

- Churches may operate at 50% capacity
- Physical distancing of two meters
- People must remain seated and wear masks at all times except for communion
- No choir
- Singing - one soloist at least 4 meters from the congregation
- Collecting names of attendees

### WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

We follow the same rules as for all other celebrations except that people must show proof of complete vaccination. However, it is not necessary to maintain an attendance record since all participants must be vaccinated.

**2021 INCOME TAX RECEIPTS** have been placed at the back of the church, for those who requested them.

## DIOCESAN ANNOUNCEMENTS

**FAITH EXPERIMENTS EXPRESS** Our next Faith Experiments Express for young people in grades 1-6 will be on Monday, February 7th at 6:00 pm via Zoom. Faith Experiments Express uses science experiments to help children learn about faith and scripture, and it's on Zoom so you can participate from the comfort of your own home. Contact Karen for more information at 387-4198 or Trevor.

**MONDAYS @ THE MOVIES** Our next Mondays @ The Movies conversation will take place February 14th at 10:30 am, when we will be discussing the 2000 film *Chocolat*, starring Johnny Depp and Juliette Binoche. Contact Karen at 387-4918 or Trevor for more information or to register.

### LAUDATO SI': SCIENCE AND RELIGION

In paragraph 62 of *Laudato Si'*, the Pope says that “Science and religion, with their distinctive approaches to understanding reality, can enter into an intense dialogue fruitful for both.” We need to remember that science and religion use different languages to point to certain truths and beliefs. In paragraph 66 Pope Francis points out that the creation accounts in the Book of Genesis suggest that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself. Science teaches us that everything in our universe is interconnected and interdependent. You are invited to our diocesan web site at <http://www.diomoncton.ca/en/news-item/diocesan-committee-laudato-si-> to view the fourth presentation from our Laudato Si Committee, prepared by Mr Eugène Aucoin.

You are in the world to witness  
that it is beloved and blessed by  
God. You are consecrated for the  
world, which awaits your  
testimony to achieve a freedom  
that gives joy, nourishes hope,  
and prepares the future.

~Pope Francis via Twitter

